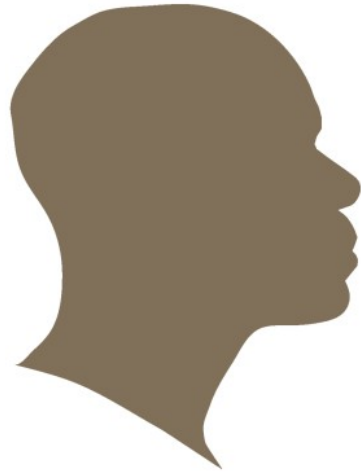


Amos Fortune: Free Man



By

Elizabeth Yates

A Novel Study
by Nat Reed

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About the author: Nat Reed was a member of the teaching profession for more than 35 years. He was a full-time instructor at Trent University in the Teacher Education Program for nine years. For more information on his work and literature, visit novelstudies.org.

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Suggestions and Expectations

This curriculum unit can be used in a variety of ways. Each chapter of the novel study focuses on one chapter of *Amos Fortune: Free Man* and is comprised of five of the following different activities:

- Before You Read
- Vocabulary Building
- Comprehension Questions
- Language Activities
- Extension Activities

Links with the Common Core Standards (U.S.)

Many of the activities included in this curriculum unit are supported by the Common Core Standards. For instance the *Reading Standards for Literature, Grade 5*, makes reference to

- a) determining the meaning of words and phrases. . . including figurative language;
- b) explaining how a series of chapters fits together to provide the overall structure;
- c) compare and contrast two characters;
- d) determine how characters ... respond to challenges;
- e) drawing inferences from the text;
- f) determining a theme of a story . . . **and many others.**

A principal expectation of the unit is that students will develop their skills in reading, writing, listening and oral communication, as well as in reasoning and critical thinking. Students will also be expected to provide clear answers to questions and well-constructed explanations. It is critical as well that students be able to relate events and the feelings of characters to their own lives and experiences and describe their own interpretation of a particular passage.

A strength of the unit is that students can work on the activities at their own pace. Every activity need not be completed by all students. A **portfolio cover** is included (p.7) so that students may organize their work and keep it all in one place. A **Student Checklist** is also included (p.6) so that a record of completed work may be recorded.

Themes which may be taught in conjunction with the novel include slavery, America in the 1700s, tolerance, the importance of community, courage, heroism and sacrifice, friendship, personal growth.

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List of Skills

Vocabulary Development

1. Locating descriptive words/phrases
2. Listing synonyms/homonyms
3. Identifying / creating *alliteration*
4. Use of capitals and punctuation
5. Identifying syllables
6. Identify *personification*.
7. Identify *anagrams*
8. Listing compound words
9. Identifying parts of speech
10. Identify/create *similes*
11. Identification of root words

Setting Activities

1. Summarize the details of a setting

Plot Activities

1. Complete a *time line* of events
2. Identify conflict in the story
3. Complete Five W's Chart
4. Identify *cliffhangers*
5. Identify the climax of the novel.
6. Complete a Story Pyramid

Character Activities

1. Determine character traits
2. Identify the protagonist
3. Relating personal experiences
4. Compare characters

Creative and Critical Thinking

1. Research
2. Write a newspaper story
3. Participate in a talk show
4. Conduct an interview
5. Create a poem
6. Write a description of personal feelings
7. Write a book review
8. Complete an Observation Chart
9. Complete a KWS Chart
10. Create a friendly letter.

Art Activities

1. A Storyboard
2. Create a collage
3. Design a cover for the novel
4. Create a comic strip

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Synopsis

“It does a man no good to be free until he learns how to live.” These were the words of Amos Fortune, born the son of a king in the At-mun-shi tribe in Africa. When Amos was only fifteen years old, he was captured by slave traders and brought to Massachusetts, where he was sold at auction. Although his freedom had been taken, Amos never lost his dignity and courage. He dreamed of being free, and of buying the freedom of his closest friends. By the time he was sixty years old, Amos Fortune began to see his dreams come true. [Courtesy of the publisher]

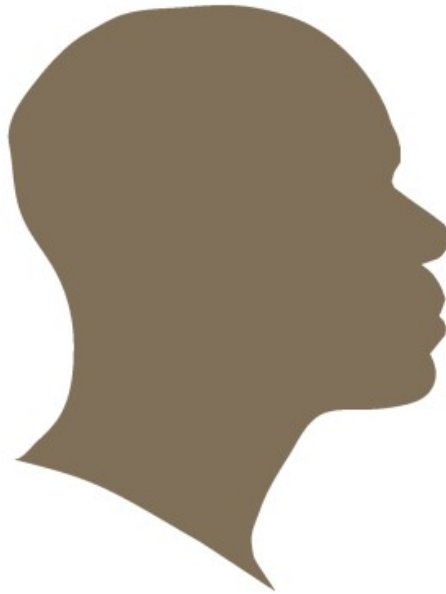
Author Biography

Elizabeth Yates

Elizabeth Yates (1905-2001) was born in Buffalo, New York, where she attended school. During part of her life she lived in Europe, where she wrote travel articles for American newspapers, such as *The Christian Science Monitor* and *The New York Times*. In 1938 Yates published her first book, followed by about fifty more, and continued writing until the 1990s. In 1950 she wrote ***Amos Fortune: Free Man***, which won the Newbery Medal in 1951 and was translated into many different languages. She wrote her own autobiography and the biographies of several other strong-willed people, including Prudence Crandall, the story of a woman who opened a school for girls that admitted both blacks and whites. Elizabeth Yates died on July 29, 2001, at the age of 95. [Biography courtesy of the publisher]



Amos Fortune: Free Man



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Name:

Amos Fortune: Free Man

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Chapter 1 – Africa 1725



Before you read the chapters:

The **protagonist** in most novels features the main character or “good guy”. The main character of *Amos Fortune: Free Man* is Amos Fortune, an African prince who was kidnapped from his home in Africa and brought to the shores of America to work as a slave. Think back on some of your favorite characters from past novels you have read or movies you’ve seen. Who would you say is your *favorite* character ever? What made you select this character?



Vocabulary:

Choose a word from the list to complete each sentence.

mystic	vengeance	reverberations	incantation
ecstatic	audible	deprived	symbolic

1. Finally the old man rose to his feet and uttered an eerie _____ over the offering.
2. Joanna's voice was barely _____ to those sitting at the back of the auditorium.
3. The strange book of spells had a _____ quality about it.
4. Most people consider the queen's power to be mostly _____.
5. I was _____ to learn that I had been accepted into the military academy.
6. “_____ is mine,” saith the Lord.
7. The _____ felt by the mine's cave-in could be felt in the next town.
8. When John's dad died, he was _____ of a strong male influence in his life.

Questions



1. Describe the **setting** of the story at the beginning of Chapter One.

2. What made the At-mun-shi people especially vulnerable to the coming of the slavers when they did?

3. How had the chief prevented his infant daughter from being drowned as an infant? Why did he have to take steps to save her?

4. Why did the people of the village think that At-mun would be a good chief one day?

5. Why do you think the slavers only killed At-mun's father?

6. Why did the slavers think that At-mun would fetch a good price?

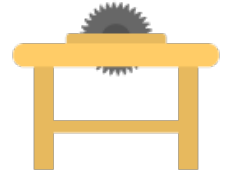
7. What do you think the author means by writing that Ath-mun *could not escape the work she had been born to do*? What work do you think this might be?

Language Activities



A. Anagrams

An **anagram** is a word that is formed by changing the order of the letters of another word. For example, the letters in the word **WAS** can also form the word **SAW**. Follow these directions to form the anagrams:



a) read the clue in the right-hand column.

b) Using the word in the left-hand column move the letters around in any order, but you must use all the letters. All of the words in the left-hand column can be found in the first chapter of *Amos Fortune: Free Man*.

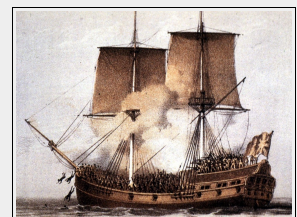
Word	Anagram	Clue
forest		Not as hard.
signal		Straighten.
earth		Pump organ.
spears		Scarce.
space		Worn by Superman and Batman.
smiled		Deceived.
aside		Brainchild.

Now find two additional words from the first chapter which have interesting anagrams to see if you can stump a classmate.

Word	Anagram	Clue

Good to Know

Between the years 1525 and 1866 more than 12 million Africans were shipped to the Americas. Of this number, 10.7 million survived the voyage (the Middle Passage) and were purchased by individuals in North America, the Caribbean as well as South America.



B. A Quatrain Poem Celebrates Courage.

The **quatrain** is a popular form of rhymed verse. It is a poem of four lines, is usually light and can be humorous. The following quatrain is the first four lines of the famous poem, *The Slave's Dream*, written by the renowned poet, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow..

*Beside the ungathered rice he lay,
His sickle in his hand;
His breast was bare, his matted hair
Was buried in the sand.*



Various rhyming schemes make up a quatrain poem. As you can see, the above four lines have a rhyming scheme of **A - B - C - B**. Other rhyming schemes include: AABB, ABAB, AAAA, AABA, ABBA, ABBA, and AAAB.

Your task is to write your own quatrain poem. You may choose a rhyming scheme that fits with your own personal creation. The theme should have something to do with the themes established in the first chapter of our novel (like *the evils of slavery* or *courage*).

The Quatrain Poem

Now create your own Quatrain Poem. Your poem must follow the format of a quatrain poem described above (and must rhyme).

Title: _____

C. Cliffhanger

Chapter One contains an important literary device called a **cliffhanger**. A cliffhanger usually occurs at the end of a chapter when the author leaves the reader in suspense. How is this true in Chapter 1? Why do you think the author ended the chapter this way?



D. A **simile** is a comparison using the words “like” or “as”. An example from Chapter One is: ... *the woman and the children who had been ... summoned by the music and swaying with it like a field of tall grass before the wind.*



What is being compared in this example?

--	--

Invent your own **similes** comparing the following items with something from your own imagination:

a) drums in the night

b) the crack of a whip

c) your choice

Extension Activity



Storyboard

A storyboard is a series of pictures that tell about an important event in a story. A story-board can tell the story of only one scene - or the entire novel. Complete the story-board below illustrating the events described in the first chapter of our novel. You may wish to practice your drawings on a separate piece of paper.



1	2
3	4
5	6

The Slave's Dream

By Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

Beside the ungathered rice he lay,
His sickle in his hand;
His breast was bare, his matted hair
Was buried in the sand.
Again, in the mist and shadow of sleep,
He saw his Native Land.

Wide through the landscape of his dreams
The lordly Niger flowed;
Beneath the palm-trees on the plain
Once more a king he strode;
And heard the tinkling caravans
Descend the mountain-road.

He saw once more his dark-eyed queen
Among her children stand;
They clasped his neck, they kissed his
cheeks,
They held him by the hand!—
A tear burst from the sleeper's lids
And fell into the sand.

Before him, like a blood-red flag,
The bright flamingoes flew;
From morn till night he followed their flight,
O'er plains where the tamarind grew,
Till he saw the roofs of Caffre huts,
And the ocean rose to view.

At night he heard the lion roar,
And the hyena scream,
And the river-horse, as he crushed the reeds
Beside some hidden stream;
And it passed, like a glorious roll of drums,
Through the triumph of his dream.

The forests, with their myriad tongues,
Shouted of liberty;
And the Blast of the Desert cried aloud,
With a voice so wild and free,
That he started in his sleep and smiled
At their tempestuous glee.

He did not feel the driver's whip,
Nor the burning heat of day;
For Death had illumined the Land of Sleep,
And his lifeless body lay
A worn-out fetter, that the soul
Had broken and thrown away!

